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New Irish Research in Criminology, Law, Childhood, Family and the Community

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New Irish Research in Criminology, Law, Childhood, Family and the Community

School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences

EDITORS: Matt Bowden, Carmel Gallagher, Ann Marie Halpenny, Mairéad Seymour
Issue 3, Spring 2016



New Irish Research in Criminology, Law, Childhood,
Family and the Community

From MA Students at School of Languages,
Law and Social Sciences, Dublin Institute of Technology

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FOREWORD

This booklet draws together a sample of the research work of graduates from taught Masters programmes in the Social Sciences and Law in DIT. The abstracts of the academically strongest theses from four Masters programmes are included along with a link to the full text of the dissertations, most of which are available on the DIT repository Arrow@DIT (<http://arrow.dit.ie/>). The research projects included in the booklet were carried out as part of the following programmes:

- MA in Criminology
- MA in Child, Family and Community Studies
- International Masters in Early Childhood Education
- MA in Law

A short biographical note on each contributor is included. This publication celebrates the work of graduates on these programmes over the period 2012-2015. We would like to thank Vivian Geiran, Director of the Probation Service for launching this publication.

The MA in Criminology and MA in Law started in 2006 and the MA in Child, Family and Community Studies started in 2007. Each programme is well established and recognised in its field, and provides a stimulating and challenging course of study. The MA in Criminology and MA in Child, Family and Community Studies are now delivered in the new DIT campus at Grangegorman which provides a very congenial learning environment for students.

The International Masters in Early Childhood Education, has been co-delivered with Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (Norway), and the University of Malta (Malta). The Masters was funded under the European Union's Erasmus Mundus Programme and attracted students from all over the world. The diverse student body and involvement of three institutions in its delivery has provided a rich learning environment. The programme is due to finish in 2016.

The applied and interdisciplinary nature of the Masters programmes in the School is reflected in the diverse and comprehensive range of social, educational and justice issues, which were investigated through empirical analysis and encompassing a myriad of sectors and agencies. Creating knowledge from varied and multiple perspectives: early years to older years, school to prison settings, front line practitioners to children and service users, the research presented provides important empirical evidence for policy makers, state agencies and professionals. Each of these theses has been judged to be at a very high academic standard. Having online access to full thesis text will be of considerable value to other researchers, to our current cohort of students and to prospective students on these MA programmes.

We wish to congratulate the graduates on their achievement and to recognise the immense work that went in to their studies and completion of their research projects. We hope that they will be encouraged to develop their work for publication in peer-reviewed journals and that some will consider continuing their studies to PhD level. We wish them every success in their future research endeavours and in their careers.

We would like to thank colleagues for help in producing this booklet. Special thanks must go to Ralph Murphy for uploading the theses to Arrow. We would also like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication to academic rigour of the thesis supervisors and all our colleagues who lecture on these programmes.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the students on our Masters programmes who through their active engagement and commitment to learning and excellence in their practice have contributed to the creation of a rich learning environment in DIT. This publication recognises the collective nature of lifelong and lifewide learning.

Dr. Matt Bowden
Dr. Carmel Gallagher
Dr. Ann Marie Halpenny
Dr. Mairéad Seymour

May 2016



NAME: John Duggan

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2015

THESIS TITLE: Ex-Prisoners' Perspectives on Prison Drug Treatment in Ireland

SUPERVISOR: Dr Kevin Lalor

CURRENT POSITION: John is currently employed by the Irish Prison Service in its Care and Rehabilitation Directorate

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore ex-prisoners' perspectives on prison drug treatment in Ireland. Prison drug treatment has increased across Europe over the last 20 years both in availability and modality. However, the delivery of drug treatment services in a prison setting is not without its challenges. The prison population is a multi disadvantaged group, which experiences a disproportionate level of health inequality and social exclusion. Substance misuse is prevalent for a high proportion of prisoners. This research is based on seven semi-structured qualitative interviews with ex-prisoners who have had experience of prison drug treatment. The perspectives of ex-prisoners add important information to the sparse literature available on prison drug treatment, especially from a user-perspective. The research found that different aspects of prison had a significant impact both on individuals and treatment. These aspects included the following: drugs in prison; prison environment; attitudes; and policies. An interesting feature of the study is the participants' understanding of the many challenges faced by the Irish Prison Service. One important finding is the need for more regular and up-to-date review of prison drug treatment. Accountability emerges as the most pressing need for prison drug treatment. While there are structures in place for complaints to be made, these structures are not fulfilling their function due to a lack of confidence in them. This leaves prisoners in a position of even greater vulnerability. In this study, ex-prisoners claim their voice amongst the voices of other actors in the field such as prison staff, medical staff, and politicians.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/73/>



NAME: Noel Barry

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2014

THESIS TITLE: Policing the Police: How is the operation of the Garda-Síochána Ombudsman Commission perceived by frontline members of An Garda Síochána?

SUPERVISOR: Dr Nicola Hughes

CURRENT POSITION: Noel is a Garda stationed in Dublin.

ABSTRACT

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) became operational in 2007. The establishment of GSOC was a new departure in the area of police complaints in Ireland and was only one part in a series of wide-ranging reforms in the area of policing introduced at the same time. Since 2007 there has been limited research conducted on the operation of GSOC. Members of An Garda have never been given an opportunity to give a detailed account of how they perceive the operation of GSOC. This study aimed to offer members of An Garda Síochána, of Garda and Sergeant rank, an opportunity to express their views of GSOC, specifically with reference to GSOC's effect on the legitimacy and accountability of An Garda Síochána. Participants were also asked if they perceived GSOC as operating in a procedurally fair manner. A survey was chosen as the most appropriate research method and 150 participants were circulated in one Garda Division. Ninety-four responded giving a response rate of 63%. The survey results demonstrate that while the majority of Gardaí welcomed the establishment of GSOC, members of An Garda Síochána have some concerns about its operation. Participants felt that GSOC had served to increase the accountability of An Garda Síochána but at the same time reduced its legitimacy. Participants further raised concerns about how GSOC conducted investigations and engaged with the media. Recommendations arising from the study include the need for a review of the operation of GSOC, both in terms of policy and procedure. The study also recommended further research in the area, both of members of An Garda Síochána and other stakeholders in the police complaints process.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/70/>



NAME: Francisca O'Kelly

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2015

THESIS TITLE: An Exploratory Study of the Role an Equine-Assisted Learning Programme in Diverting Young People from Criminal Pathways

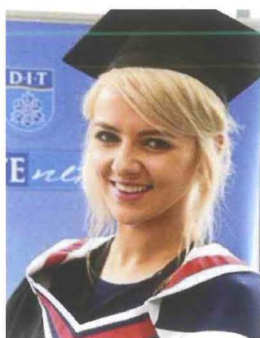
SUPERVISOR: Dr Mairéad Seymour

CURRENT POSITION: Francisca has worked with young people in the homeless sector for 15 years and is currently a Social Care Leader.

ABSTRACT

Interest in the potential of equine-assisted therapy and learning, where horses are incorporated in therapeutic, rehabilitative and educational interventions to ameliorate emotional, behavioural and social issues, has increased in the past half century. More recently, equine-assisted therapy and learning has been utilised in social work and penal contexts, such as in the rehabilitation and support of at-risk youth and young prisoners. However, there is a dearth of empirical research and published evaluative studies examining the effectiveness of these emerging programmes. The purpose of this study is to explore the role that a Dublin-based equine-assisted learning programme plays in diverting young people from criminal pathways. The perceived impact and personal experiences of participants participating in the equine-assisted learning programme are explored using a qualitative research approach. The findings that emerged from the study indicate that the development of empathy, self-esteem, self-efficacy, feelings of hope and belonging, practical skills, and positive relationships with practitioners, were facilitated through this equine-assisted intervention. These, in turn, support the desistance process for the young people and assist them in the transition towards more positive life outcomes.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/85/>



NAME:	Eilis Lothian
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2015
THESIS TITLE:	An Exploration of the Role of Pre-School Breakfast Clubs in Supporting Early Childhood Development and Building Parent-Practitioner Relationships
SUPERVISOR:	Phil Keogh
CURRENT POSITION:	Deputy Manager of a private crèche and pre-school. The setting is one of the largest in the area.

ABSTRACT

The scope of this study is located within the Early Childhood Care and Education sector. The study aims to investigate the role of pre-school breakfast clubs in relation to their effectiveness as a health promotion strategy and the ways in which attending such a club may support early childhood development and build solid parent-practitioner relationships. Furthermore, the study aims to explore participants' perspectives on the importance of good nutrition for young children, and the possible barriers that may inhibit parents from providing children with their breakfast regularly. Data was collected using a qualitative methodology, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups with parents, practitioners and children who availed of the breakfast club. Findings from the study present a positive overview of the pre-school breakfast club and nutrition within the Early Childhood Care and Education sector in general. The breakfast club experience itself fosters opportunities for children to develop their social skills, language skills, learn about good nutrition and sample a range of new and different breakfasts. Additionally the results of the study illustrate the prevalence of strong parent-practitioner relationships. In general good nutrition is perceived by participants as being of paramount importance, especially for young children. Thus, the breakfast club is an effective support strategy for childhood development and family support. Findings also illustrate the resistance of a number of parents to participate in their child's breakfast club.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/82/>



NAME: James Barry

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014

THESIS TITLE: An Investigation of Youth Participation in an Irish Youth Mental Health Service: Staff and Young People's Perspectives

SUPERVISOR: Dr Sinead Freeman

CURRENT POSITION: Manager. Jigsaw: an early intervention youth mental health service for young people aged between 12-25 years

ABSTRACT

Youth participation is widely recognised as essential to the design and delivery of youth mental health services. Despite this there is limited literature available on youth participation in these services. This study aimed to develop an enhanced understanding about youth participation in Headstrong, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health and its programme of service delivery Jigsaw. A mixed methods approach, using focus groups and questionnaires, gathered the opinions of 160 staff and young people involved in the organisation on their experiences of youth participation. The factors that supported youth participation were noted as: allocated resources to facilitate youth participation, a staff member with responsibility for working with young people, a progressive organisational culture, and positive staff attitudes towards youth participation. Young people expressed beliefs that they had benefited in many ways from being involved in a youth participation structure. These included; increased confidence working with staff, better understanding of mental health, increased confidence working in a professional environment, increased feelings of belongingness, and improved help-seeking skills. Involving young people had also been beneficial to staff and the organisation in numerous ways, including the promotion of the service to the young people availing of the service and decision-making. Youth participation in Headstrong/Jigsaw has helped create a service that is youth friendly, credible and accountable. However, the organisation experienced challenges in involving young people, including a lack of time and resources to adequately involve young people, an absence of training to support young people and staff to work in a participatory way, and a lack of clarity about youth participation within the organisation.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/69/>



NAME:	Helen Graham
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2015
THESIS TITLE:	Re-engaging with education as an older mature student: Their challenges, their achievements, their stories
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Matt Bowden
CURRENT POSITION:	Helen is currently furthering her studies in the area of adult education

ABSTRACT

The decision to re-engage with education at any age can be a significant step for anyone to take. The number of mature learners engaging in further education in Ireland is increasing yearly and public policy continues to encourage lifelong learning. There is a responsibility on institutions providing further education to engage with their students in a meaningful and constructive way. This study addressed an important but neglected area in Irish education research. The key purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of a group of mature people who had re-engaged with education after several years and were pursuing a further education course. A primary objective of the study was to improve understanding of mature students' experiences and thereby give a voice to their stories, their achievements and their struggles. A mixed method approach was utilised whereby a questionnaire and individual interviews were carried out with the identified research group. The findings of the study indicated significant personal growth and challenges within this cohort of learners. Challenges included: Finances, lack of IT skills, level of academic skills require and time management. Also highlighted in the findings were the different needs of mature students compared to more traditional younger students, the importance of awareness among tutors of their needs, in addition to the importance of support services available. Recommendations include: Raising awareness among prospective students of the level of academic skills and the level of IT knowledge required for a course pre-enrolment; that policies and practices be put in place in order to support the older cohort of students; that students be made aware of available supports; promotion of awareness among tutors of the unique needs of the older cohort of learners.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/77/>



NAME: Fiona Hassett

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014

THESIS TITLE: "If they fail that first year, it's very hard for them to recover": An exploration of factors that support and hinder the transition to mainstream school for children with special educational needs and their families

SUPERVISOR: Dr Karen Smith

CURRENT POSITION: Part-time lecturer, B.A. in Early Childhood Education and Care, Institute of Technology, Carlow

ABSTRACT

The transition to school is increasingly recognised as a significant life event for children, with a positive or negative transition impacting on their social and emotional wellbeing and academic achievements. Children with special educational needs are at an increased risk of poor adjustment to school and their families are vulnerable to additional stresses due to the child's needs. The transition to school is therefore an important period for these families, and the supports available to them to make this transition are essential to provide children with the best possible start to formal education. In this study, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were carried out with parents, early years professionals, primary school teachers and a special needs assistant, to explore what factors support and hinder the transition to mainstream school for children with special educational needs and their families. The findings indicate that mainstream school is associated with a number of benefits for children with special educational needs and their parents, in particular the sense of belonging they feel within the community as they get to know other families and children attending mainstream school. Schools provide a supportive role for children with special educational needs and their families with the transition to mainstream school; although schools are faced with certain restrictions that make the facilitation of this process challenging. The importance of preschool in the transition process emerged as another key finding, particularly in promoting important skills for school readiness. Finally, the study highlighted the ad hoc nature of resource allocation between schools for children with special educational needs, and the negative impact accessing educational resources can have on parents.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/78/>



NAME: Kate Jones

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2015

THESIS TITLE: Just Jocking? An exploration of how 10-12 year old children experience an Equine Assisted Learning Programme, in a DEIS School, in Limerick city.

SUPERVISOR: Anne Marie Shier

CURRENT POSITION: Working as a Youth Officer for Foróige, developing, facilitating and accessing evidence-based interventions and programmes

ABSTRACT

Throughout Irish history, the horse has had many uses. In modern Ireland, some communities have harnessed the power of the horse to deliver a range of social interventions. However, at present, there is little published research about equine assisted programmes in Ireland. The main aim of this research project is to explore how 10-12 year old children, from a DEIS primary school in Limerick city, experience an Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) programme facilitated by the local Garda Youth Diversion Project (GYDP). The project aims to be child centred, emergent and participatory, in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1986. The research methods adopted included micro-ethnographic observation and children's photography, followed by semi-structured interviews, where the children's photography was used as an elicitation technique. Although it is recognised that this study is on a small scale, and is not generalizable, the findings for this sample support EAL as a positive intervention which promotes learning, self-efficacy, relaxation, relationship-building, social support and self-awareness. The programme also offers children the opportunity to provide gender neutral care and develop empathy. Equally, EAL appears to give children a space to engage in culturally-significant activities in a safe environment. In sum, the findings suggest that EAL may be a successful programme for engaging young people with an interest, but not necessarily a background, in horses. These findings could be relevant to other DEIS schools and GYDP's in Ireland, especially in areas with strong ties to horses.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/79/>



NAME:	Gail Ferguson
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014
THESIS TITLE:	Including children with disabilities in mainstream education: An exploration of the challenges and considerations for parents and primary school teachers
SUPERVISOR:	Judy Doyle
CURRENT POSITION:	Working as assistant manager in a pre-school in Waterford City, and furthering studies in the area of adult education.

ABSTRACT

Recent decades have seen children's rights and the rights of persons with disabilities come to the fore. Current policy emphasis on inclusive education means that more children with disabilities and special educational needs are being placed in mainstream education instead of special schools, as was traditionally the case. The aim of this study was to explore the area of inclusion in education, from the perspective of primary school teachers and parents of children with intellectual disabilities. A key objective was to determine if the reality of including children with disabilities in mainstream settings corresponded with the policy on inclusion. A phenomenological approach was taken for the purpose of this study, as the researcher wanted to gain personal insight into the lived experiences of participants. Focus group and individual interviews were carried out by the researcher with a sample of primary school teachers and parents of children with intellectual disabilities currently attending mainstream school. Teachers' perspectives and experiences provided realistic insight into the process of achieving and implementing inclusive education in regular school settings, while the experiences of parents of children with disabilities offered valuable insight into the reality of the education system from the point of view of accessing adequate supports for children. Findings showed that while inclusive education is beneficial for children with and without disabilities, particularly in terms of social development, oftentimes opportunity for genuine inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities is compromised by challenges and barriers that exist within the education system.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/75/>



NAME: Alexandra Delimata

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2014

THESIS TITLE: A study of serious violent and sexual offenders released on supervised license in Northern Ireland between 2010 and 2013

SUPERVISOR: Dr Mairéad Seymour

CURRENT POSITION: Parole Commissioner for Northern Ireland

ABSTRACT

Extended Custodial Sentences (ECS) for serious offenders were introduced under the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. Recall rates for these offenders appear disproportionately high compared with other types of public protection sentenced offenders in Northern Ireland. Guided by life-course theories and using mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research, the study investigates the outcomes for ECS offenders released into the community between 2010 and 2013. Content analysis developed profiles of all (N=57) ECS offenders released under supervised licence by 31 December 2013 and examined characteristics of recalled (N=31) and non-recalled (N=26) offenders to identify possible contributing factors to recall. The recall rate was established at 54%. Childhood trauma, substance misuse, mental health issues, prolific offending and length of time spent on remand characterised the total ECS population. Poly-substance misuse, lack of family support and hostel accommodation on release emerged as key factors amongst the recalled population, nearly half of whom were recalled within four weeks. Despite the small population, findings provide initial indications of factors contributing to the ECS recall rate, highlight the importance of transition services and increase knowledge of an area in which no research has been done to date in Northern Ireland.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/72/>



NAME: Caroline Kelly

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2015

THESIS TITLE: An exploration of the perspectives of young males with regard to their experience of non-heterosexual sexuality transitions and the potential influences on this transition within an Irish context

SUPERVISOR: Dr Ann Marie Halpenny

CURRENT POSITION: Child and Family Development Worker with Barnardos and as a Youth Advocate with YAP Ireland

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the perspectives of young males with regard to their experience of non-heterosexual sexuality transitions and the potential influences on this transition within an Irish context. A qualitative research approach was adopted, using semi-structured interviews with young males between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-two years. This method allowed for the details of participants' lived experience and their individual perceptions to be captured. Key findings suggest that experiences of non-heterosexual sexuality transitions in both family and friendship contexts shaped how the transition was negotiated. Disclosure of sexual minority status to family members is still a significant issue for many individuals and can be met with a wide variety of responses. Despite negative initial responses the transition generally strengthened and positively impacted on family and friendship relationships over time. The overwhelming majority of sexuality related support was found to come from friends, with non-heterosexual friends in particular offering support in terms of understanding and reassurance. A significant finding of this research was that heterosexist beliefs and values were reaffirmed constantly through cultural and social institutions and, thus, sexual minority issues were invisible within cultural discourses. The individual nature of and multiple influences on non-heterosexual sexuality transitions highlight the need to develop and explore inclusive theoretical frameworks that allow for variation in historical, cultural and psychological contexts.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/80/>



NAME: Derek Bryan

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014

THESIS TITLE: From Institution to Integration: The perspectives and experiences of disability sector staff in the transition to New Directions

SUPERVISOR: Dr Carmel Gallagher

CURRENT POSITION: Disability Sector professional and Associate Lecturer in Social Care.

ABSTRACT

Day services play a large part in the community life of people with intellectual disabilities. Arising from a Health Service Executive review of adult day services in 2012 a new approach called New Directions was initiated. This study aimed to explore experiences and perspectives of staff from the disability sector on the proposed new ways of working with people with intellectual disabilities. Twelve staff including volunteers and managers from a disability organisation were interviewed. All participants were directly involved in the implementation of New Directions. Findings highlighted the best aspects of current day services that should be merged with New Directions such as a sense of belonging, connectedness and companionship. The participants expressed concerns that people with intellectual disabilities may be lonely, while also acknowledging that they tend to be very sociable. Findings suggested that families are challenged by New Directions and framing person-centeredness in partnership with families is recommended. The findings suggested that people with intellectual disabilities bring awareness, diversity and joy to communities. However, it emerged that New Directions is a policy that communities may not be entirely ready for. Managers reflected on organisational culture, change management and the leadership now needed whilst staff considered changes to their roles, and the corresponding challenges and training now required. Identifying and coordinating supports within the community also emerged as a key challenge. The study found overall that there was strong support for New Directions with some concern that there may be an over emphasis on community. Supporting people into the positions that create friendships, social, educational and employment opportunities were cited as the best ways to maximise New Directions.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/71/>



NAME: Donna Tobin

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014

THESIS TITLE: Children's Right to be Heard: Exploring Children's Perceptions of Happiness and Factors Contributing to Happiness in the Pre-School Environment

SUPERVISOR: Dr Nicola Hughes

CURRENT POSITION: Early Years Practitioner in a Pre-School and After-School Programme

ABSTRACT

There has been a growing recognition for children's voices to be heard on matters which affect their lives. This has been encouraged by the ratification of the UNCRC in Ireland which has influenced numerous other policies. This study aims to provide an opportunity for young children to have their voices heard and demonstrate how children can be involved as active research participants in empirical research. An emphasis was placed on positive psychology. The aim was to explore the children's perception of happiness and ascertain the factors which contributed to their happiness within the pre-school environment. Fifteen children attending a pre-school in urban Dublin were the research participants. An adaptation of the Mosaic approach was used to collect the data. Specifically, methodological tools included photographs, focus groups and drawing activities.

The findings from the study indicated that children could offer insightful and valuable information regarding their understanding and experiences of happiness. Children's perceptions of happiness were linked to physical features, emotional well-being, familial relationships and comedic influences. Four main themes emerged with regard to factors contributing to the children's happiness in their pre-school environment. These included; a sense of identity and belonging, the outdoor learning environment, relationships with peers and teachers and play opportunities. The study identified that as primary stakeholders in the early years setting children have meaningful insights to share. Based on the findings recommendations were made for further similar research to be carried out in alternative geographical areas in Ireland.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/87/>



NAME: Eoin Morrison

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2013

THESIS TITLE: Policing and Social Influence: Procedural Justice and Compliance Dynamics in the Work of Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers

SUPERVISOR: Dr Sinead Freeman

CURRENT POSITION: Student/trainee at the Garda College Templemore

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of social influence in the context of the professional relations between Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) and the young people with whom they work. Of specific importance is the concept of procedural justice and its relation to perceptions of legitimacy and compliance. The aim of the research was to investigate JLOs' perspectives on the impact of their style of engagement with young people's levels of compliance with legal authority. Five semi-structured interviews were conducted with serving JLOs. Findings were organised thematically and subjected to an integrated process of inductive and deductive reasoning, informed by existing literature on social influence, procedural justice and compliance theory. Results suggested that patterns of procedural justice are central to the work of Garda JLOs and are essential to their ability to develop positive relations with the young people with whom they work. Evidence was found to suggest that this dynamic promotes the perception of JLOs as legitimate figures of authority on the part of young people, providing an important forum through which young people's resistance to the gardaí as an institution can be addressed. The knowledge gained through this study provides information relevant to police training and service provision, highlights the importance of the JLO's role in securing behavioural compliance from young people, and adds to the existing body of literature regarding social influence on compliance dynamics. Furthermore, the research has highlighted some specific areas for further study, the pursuit of which would serve to deepen understanding with regards to this particular aspect of behavioural motivation.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/83/>

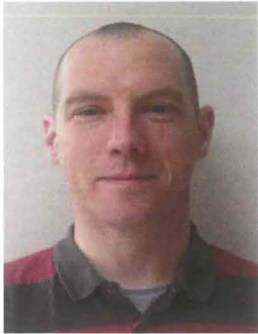


NAME:	Helena Goodwin
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Child, Family & Community Studies, 2014
THESIS TITLE:	It's in the Mix: An exploratory study into the experiences of children, parents and staff in the provision of a mixed age group model in a West Dublin early years setting
SUPERVISOR:	Phil Keogh
CURRENT POSITION:	Co-owner/operator of early years education centres; placement tutor, St. Patricks-Dublin City University.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of children, parents and staff participating in a mixed-age model of early years provision using a qualitative approach. The aim of the research was to interpret and clarify the participants' experiences. Using semi-structured interviews, a focus group and an observation of practice the study addressed the following questions: What were the perceptions of the children, staff and parents experiencing a mixed-age group model? Has the mixed-age model proved to be advantageous and/or challenging to the community of the service? How could the provision be improved for those involved? Research has suggested that both older and younger children benefit from this model in a variety of different ways. However, these benefits are not necessarily automatic. There appears to be a number of relevant factors such as, the optimum age range of the children concerned, the allocation of time to the mixed age group, the percentage of older to younger children and the strategies which the adults put in place to maximise the developmental outcomes for all children within the mixed-age group. Thematic analysis was carried out to capture the relevant data in relation to the research questions and to establish the configuration of responses within the data collected. This study has shed some light onto the workings of a mixed-age group setting. In analyzing the findings there appears to be significant benefits to the children attending this particular service. The philosophical beliefs underpinning the service appear to provide the children with unique learning opportunities and social experiences. This study does not attempt to suggest that all settings should operate in this manner but rather seeks to give some insight into an alternative method of early years provision.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/76/>



NAME:	Jonathan O'Brien
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Criminology 2014
THESIS TITLE:	A Garda perspective on the role and the relationship dynamics involved when managing cases of high-risk young offenders appearing before the Children Court
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Mairéad Seymour
CURRENT POSITION:	Member of An Garda Síochána

ABSTRACT

The aim of the national Garda Case Management Programme is to provide a child-centred, family inclusive, multi-agency approach to manage young people appearing before the Courts. The programme has been in operation since 2007 but to date there has been no published research on it. This research examines the perspectives of six Garda case managers and explores the development and evolution of the specific dynamics that form the basis of the working relationship between a Garda case manager and a young offender. The research centres on a number of key questions including: what is the role of the Garda youth crime case manager?; what are the dynamics involved in the relationship between the case manager and the young offender?; how do the dynamics involved in the case management relationship evolve over time?; and what are the implications of these developments for youth justice practice? The findings give a valuable insight into the programme and the relationship dynamic that develops between Garda case managers and the young people being managed. It also provides a platform from which to develop further research in the area.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/94/>



NAME:	Ken King
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Child, Family and Community Studies, 2013
THESIS TITLE:	A Study of the Potential of Educational Transfer from Grandchild to Grandparent, from the Child's Perspective and Agency, in a School Environment
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Carmel Gallagher
CURRENT POSITION:	Ken King runs a college for informal learning with Crosscare

ABSTRACT

This research acknowledges the ability of children to be active in their own learning and has the potential to promote opportunities for life-long and life-wide learning by offering school-based Intergenerational Learning Programmes. The main aim of this study was to develop a pilot intergenerational lesson with children, aged 10 to 12 years old, to enable the transfer of knowledge and skills from children to their grandparents or other older people in a school setting. Using the Irish Primary School's SPHE Curriculum as a source, the project-based research was informed, firstly, by the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and Rogoff, and secondly, by the perspectives of the co-researchers through the use of interpretive methodology. The primary intention was to enable the children to have their voices heard, learn new skills and benefit from the confidence the process could offer them by their active participation in Educational Action Research. A mixed-method approach was employed with qualitative data, obtained from focus groups, and quantitative data collection, facilitated by a web-based questionnaire. The study contributes to the enhancement of skills and self-esteem of the co-researchers, as evidenced by the information obtained from the assessment of learning and project evaluation, undertaken by the children who participated. The findings indicate that there is support among children, grandparents and other older people for the development of an IG pilot lesson from a child's perspective. This project-based initiative has developed a process, which unlike many IG projects to date, includes significant involvement of children and has focused on active learning in the context of relationships.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/81/>



NAME: Tracey Nelson

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA Child, Family and Community Studies, 2013

THESIS TITLE: 'They just don't care about the caring': Parents' perspectives of early childhood education and care policy and associated funding programmes

SUPERVISOR: Dr Ann Marie Halpenny

CURRENT POSITION: Development Officer with Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate parents' perspectives on early childhood care and education (ECEC) policy in Ireland and the associated funding programmes available to them. A qualitative research approach was adopted, using semi-structured interviews and a focus group as a research tool to gain an insight into the experiences of families regarding ECEC. Parents availing of current ECEC funding programmes and grandparents who care for their grandchildren were identified as a representative subgroup of the research population. Six parents and six grandparents took part in the present study. Key findings suggest families are invisible in ECEC funding policy despite their fundamental role as co-educators in their child's learning. Another key finding was the invisible child within policy, with the thrust for target driven age and stage based norms dominating policy. Despite their de facto exclusion from funding programmes, grandparents were found to be crucial in supporting families' childcare arrangements through a process of mutual exchange. The traditional role of kinship is a driving factor in this emerging childcare sector. The perspective purported to underpin Irish childcare policy is that of children's rights, with the acknowledgement of the child's social and cultural environments. Yet, in practice the political economic perspective dominates policy, with an emphasis on the target driven priority of education and school-readiness. Key recommendations which arise from the study suggest that Irish ECEC funding policy needs to reaffirm its commitment to family and children as pivotal in the ECEC process. Real and substantive parental involvement policies and practices must be developed to re-establish the fundamental role parents play in the child's early years. The role grandparents play in childcare needs to be acknowledged and supported through policy.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/84/>



NAME: Triona O'Sullivan

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Criminology, 2013

THESIS TITLE: The Great Epoch: An Exploration of the Psychology of Desistance from Offending

SUPERVISOR: Dr Kevin Lalor

CURRENT POSITION: Local Development Manager with Dublin North West Area Partnership

ABSTRACT

This research is an exploratory study aimed at examining the psychological processes underlying desistance from offending based on the lived experience of seven ex-offenders. A phenomenological approach was chosen and the research used qualitative semi-structured interviewing in order to collect rich data regarding the self-narratives of participants. Research findings confirmed several themes already prominent in the desistance literature including the importance of psychological maturation, the role of choice, the importance of the individuals' self-concept, the role of making good and cognitive change in the area of thought processes and attitudes to offending. In addition, several themes emerged which are under-discussed in the contemporary desistance literature including the relationship between the psychology of addiction recovery and desistance, the evolution of empathy and the importance of identifying, experiencing and expressing emotion. The dissertation concludes by discussing the relevance of the psychology of desistance in terms of penal measures and the reintegration of ex-offenders along with making a number of recommendations for further research.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/86/>



NAME:	Thomas Talbot
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA Criminology 2013
THESIS TITLE:	Plural Policing: The Multifaceted World of Irish State "Policing" Authorities
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Mary Rogan
CURRENT POSITION:	District Manager, Revenue Commissioners

ABSTRACT

The research explores the undocumented world of the wider policing community acting in an official capacity on behalf of the Irish state. It also produces a comprehensive empirical mapping of these governance entities in 2013. The study, for the first time, documents all prosecuting (policing) organisations operating within the Irish criminal justice system, alongside An Garda Síochána and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). A mixed method design was used incorporating a comprehensive questionnaire for organisations and detailed documentary analysis of relevant reports produced by the Dáil and Seanad Éireann during the first seven months of 2013. The research succeeded in empirically mapping a total of fifty-one policing organisations which were active in the Irish criminal justice system. The study discovered a substantial increase in the proliferation of these policing agencies over the last two decades. In addition, there appeared to be a greater preponderance to select prosecution as an enforcement method, with long established organisations now prosecuting for the first time. The study allows policy makers to compare and contrast organisations performing a similar policing role with a view to maximising efficiency of resources and also to ensure that those charged with policing Irish society do so in a fair and transparent manner.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/93/>



NAME: Tara Duigenean

PROGRAMME & YEAR: MA in Child, Family and Community Studies, 2014

THESIS TITLE: An exploration of the experiences of individuals caring for a family member and the impact this caregiving role has on their lives

SUPERVISOR: Dr Ann Marie Halpenny

CURRENT POSITION: Applying for PhD research programmes

ABSTRACT

Ireland, in keeping with most western societies, has witnessed a steady increase in the proportion of old and very old individuals in the population. This, combined with escalations in degenerative and chronic diseases, and together with the development of new sophisticated and portable medical technologies that assist in caring for people with highly complicated health conditions in the home, places further demands on individuals to care for a family member. Furthermore, a fundamental objective of Irish Government policy for older people, children and adults with a condition or a disability is to enable these individuals to live in dignity and independence, in their own homes and communities for as long as they can. Carers are central to the success of this endeavour. As such, it is vital that the experiences of carers and impact of caring are considered.

This study set out to explore, through qualitative, semi-structured interviews, the experiences of individuals who care for a family member and the impact that this has on their lives. Seven participants in this study were full-time family carers, while two further participants worked as family carer support workers and had an abundance of knowledge in this area. The findings relating to the experience of family carers were analysed under four broad headings: motivations to care; impact on life; formal support; and positive aspects of providing care.

From the nine interviews common themes were identified, conclusions were drawn, and recommendations for future research, policy and practice were made.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/74/>



NAME:	Mary Broderick
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	MA in Law, 2015
THESIS TITLE:	Simplifying the complexity of supplementary pensions: Suggestions for member-centred reforms
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Stephen Carruthers
CURRENT POSITION:	2015

ABSTRACT

Pension coverage among workers in Ireland is low with only an estimated 41.3% of private sector workers contributing to a supplementary pension. In addition, the system for workplace pensions is considered to be unnecessarily complex and beyond the understanding of many workers. This research aimed to examine some areas of pensions that are particularly complex, from a members point of view, and to make suggestions as to how the system could be more member-centred. The research focused specifically on three areas: State support given for pension saving, the structure of provision and personalised information to members. Tax relief is given on pensions but research indicates that its application and value is very often misunderstood. Even those saving for a pension underestimate the value of tax relief. This research explored how State support could be better understood by members, which may encourage increased saving. A trust structure allows the member to benefit from having a third party involved, with a legal obligation to act in the best interests of the trust. Large trust based schemes also allow for economies of scale and increased buying power, attracting lower costs than any other structure. However this research shows Ireland has a comparatively large number of small schemes, so members are unlikely to benefit as they perhaps could. Disclosure regulations outline the information member annual benefit statements must contain, however there are views that members are unlikely to read them and even less likely to understand them. Without a reasonable understanding of their likely benefits, it is difficult for members to make informed decisions about their pension. This research examined what information the member should receive and how that information is structured. Changes to these areas, focusing on the member's best interests, could have a significant impact on members' understanding of pensions and encourage engagement and higher coverage.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/95/>



NAME:	Antje Bitterberg
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2013
THESIS TITLE:	Feeling a sense of belonging in the Early Childhood Centre: An exploration into a community of practice
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Ann Marie Halpenny
CURRENT POSITION:	Instructor in the Early Childhood Care and Education at Capilano University, North Vancouver, Canada.

ABSTRACT

This exploration is rooted in the vision of a democratic classroom in which all voices are heard and takes place in an early years setting, or community of practice, in Dublin Ireland. The aim of the study is to explore what it means to belong to this particular community of practice from multiple perspectives. The objectives are twofold: to respond to our ethical commitment as teachers; and to explore the sense of belonging in a community of practice. This is a qualitative study conducted in three distinctive stages that build on each other. To start, I immersed myself in the setting as a participant-observer for four days to become familiar with routines and to build rapport. These participant-observations informed the design of the focus groups in the second stage of this project in which their sense of belonging was explored: One focus group consisted of five children aged 44 months to 55 months, and one group of two teachers. In the third stage of the data collection I conducted interviews with a parent, an Early Childhood Education student, the centre manager, and another teacher. The findings highlight the ways in which the participants are respected for their unique identities, while sharing some aspects of a social identity with other members of their community. In addition, the findings revealed factors that facilitate a sense of belonging. Children's invaluable insight into their own perspectives stands out as a strength of this research project, while a limitation lies in the interpretation of the findings without consulting the children. Recommendations for the future include designing spaces for teachers to renew their practice, and researching with, rather than on, children.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/91/>



NAME:	Czarecah T. Oropilla
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2014
THESIS TITLE:	Children's Voice in Exploring Their Interests Using Different Media
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Mairéad Seymour
CURRENT POSITION:	Part-time consultant with consultant firm and Operations Co-ordinator with Play Innovations Inc.

ABSTRACT

Highlighting the importance of including young children's voices as informed by international research and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this research project aims to identify the topics that young children consider interesting and to explore the ways that they like to document and share their interests with other people. The study also acknowledges the growing overlap between young children and different media technologies, and children's lived experiences in information technology-rich environments. The research project adopted a qualitative methodology incorporating an exploratory and participatory approach. A small group of five children (4-5 years old) in Dublin, Ireland was selected to participate in a series of child-friendly and creative activities. The children were given the opportunity to select and use papers and pens, disposable cameras or digital cameras to document their interests. The information-documenting activity using their preferred media yielded children's drawings, photographs and stories about their interests. Data suggests that there are a number of ways children could document and share their interests with other people using different media. While it may be true that there are risks particularly with the use of digital technologies, this research project demonstrates how it also has powerful potential for participation. This is especially true since it has been found that these technologies are firmly in the children's lived experiences. The data also suggests that the children's interests include personal details about themselves, their activities, of other people, and of nature and places, all of which contribute to children's developing aspect of identity and belonging. These themes of interests also suggest that children are interested in a balance of environments and experiences. Overall, the research project demonstrates the children's capability to participate, using their preferred media, simply because they are given the chance.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/88/>



NAME:	Stephanie Nicole Sagmoen Siqueira
PROGRAMME & YEAR:	International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2015
THESIS TITLE:	Documentation within the Anti-Bias Approach: A Case Study Exploring Family and Practitioners' Perceptions and Experiences
SUPERVISOR:	Dr Barbara Lazenby Simpson
CURRENT POSITION:	Grade 4 teacher in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

ABSTRACT

Early childhood settings are diverse and challenging and building strong relationships between practitioners and families is vital. This research was framed around the aim to identify the factors influencing the perspectives and experiences of early childhood practitioners and families in relation to the use of pedagogical documentation within the Anti-Bias Approach. Additionally, the research aims to identify the benefits of using pedagogical documentation as a tool in the Anti-Bias Approach for building relationships. Nine semi-structured interviews with early childhood practitioners and parents/family members as well as a qualitative analysis of pedagogical documentation was conducted. Data analysis suggests five key factors influencing practitioner and parent relationships including time use; resources; language; clear expectations; attitudes, beliefs and values. Additionally, the benefits of the use of documentation within the Anti-Bias Approach have been identified under three themes, identity and sense of belonging, representation of culture and effective engagement of parents and family members.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/92/>



NAME: Ana Janelidze

PROGRAMME & YEAR: International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2014

THESIS TITLE: Experiences and perspectives of practitioners in culturally diverse early childhood education and care centres in Ireland

SUPERVISOR: Dr Mairéad Seymour

CURRENT POSITION: Education Officer (Early Childhood), UNICEF, Georgia

ABSTRACT

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings in Ireland have become increasingly multicultural. While policy documents and curricular guidelines for ECCE in Ireland emphasize the importance of addressing diversity and equality issues, implementation of culturally relevant practices may vary according to practitioners' skills, knowledge, perspectives and previous experiences with cultural diversity. The purpose of the study was to represent a variety of perspectives that practitioners might hold regarding cultural diversity in ECCE. It represents an exploratory study of four practitioners' perspectives and experiences of cultural diversity in two multicultural ECCE settings in Dublin, Ireland. Phenomenological methodology was applied to the study to generate rich data on various issues related to the research questions. In-depth interviews and observations were chosen as methods for data collection. The findings of the study suggest that practitioners hold a variety of perspectives on cultural diversity, its relevance to ECCE and young children's lives and appropriate activities for exploring culture related topics with children. Practitioners identified language related issues as the key challenge when working in culturally diverse ECCE communities. They critically approached available multicultural resources, but did not feel confident to bring forth change. Overall, evidence from this small-scale study suggests that practitioners value cultural diversity and in general terms most of them acknowledge the importance of addressing culture related issues in early childhood; however they might lack confidence, skills and knowledge to address issues in everyday practice and engage in an open dialogue with families. These findings have implications for policy and professional education programs regarding the needs to be addressed in pre and in service training programs for practitioners.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/90/>



NAME: Anna May Navarrete

PROGRAMME & YEAR: International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2015

THESIS TITLE: Assessment in the Early Years: The Perspectives and Practices of Early Childhood Educators

SUPERVISOR: Dr Ann Marie Halpenny

CURRENT POSITION: Preschool teacher at SIS Swiss International School, Ingolstad.

ABSTRACT

In recent years there has been growing attention to the importance of assessment in early childhood education, especially in relation to supporting children's learning. The present study aimed to investigate early childhood educators' perspectives and practices regarding assessment in the early years. In particular, the meanings and values which educators ascribe to assessment were explored. Moreover, the study focused on strategies educators employed, along with the associated support and challenges relating to their assessment practice. Adopting a qualitative design, in-depth interviews were conducted with eight educators from different settings, and thematic analysis was used to identify emergent themes. Subsequently, information from assessment tools that educators used in practice were collected and analysed. Findings show that educators hold diverse views and have varying approaches to assessment, using different tools and methods. Nevertheless, participants agree that assessment is important for supporting children's learning and development. Findings suggest that collaboration plays some role in aiding assessment practice, particularly collaborating with colleagues and parents; however, findings also indicate that children have limited participation in the assessment process. The study also suggests that time, structural factors, qualification and training contribute to the ease in which assessment is carried out. Delving into educators' perspectives and practices on early years assessment can offer insight on what actually happens in settings and the thoughts and attitudes that direct them, while shedding light on the different issues they are faced with. The author hopes that the findings of the study can direct future research by investigating issues surrounding assessment practice, greater collaboration with families, and children's agency in assessment.

Full text of this thesis is at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/aaschssldis/89/>



GRÁINSEACH GHORMÁN
GRANGE GORMAN